FOREWORD

The Chesapeake Bay — one of our nation's greatest natural and economic resources — is a source of recreation, commerce and livelihood for many Marylanders. It is an integral component of the State's economy and quality of life and provides unparalleled environmental benefits, including habitat for a myriad of living resources. The restoration of the Bay is an intensive cooperative effort involving all levels of stakeholders, including individuals working to protect and restore local streams and rivers.

The watershed's jurisdictions — six States and the District of Columbia — must cut current nutrient loads to the Bay in half to meet the *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement* water quality goals. This means reducing annual nitrogen and phosphorus loads baywide by 110 million pounds and 6.3 million pounds, respectively, from 2000 levels.

In April 2003, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia agreed to continue to work together to achieve these goals and restore the Bay. These kinds of reductions, however, cannot be achieved through Federal and State government actions alone. Local governments, businesses, and private citizens all need to do their part as well.

These nutrient reduction goals are not only necessary to restore the Chesapeake Bay but are also needed to address the requirements of the *Federal Clean Water Act*. In September 2005, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published revised State water quality standards that Maryland and Virginia adopted. These standards establish a regulatory framework for the Bay restoration effort through the development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) allocation.

TMDLs prescribe the pollutant reduction levels that are necessary to meet the revised water quality standards. Like the Bay nutrient reduction goals, a TMDL sets a limit, or cap, on pollutants that impair water quality and cause violations of water quality standards for a stream, lake, river, or the Bay.

The TMDL for the Bay has not been established yet; however, if the water quality standards are not met by 2010, a TMDL will be developed and will set pollutant loading limits for all sources within the watershed. These sources include discharges from point sources (such as sewage treatment plants, industrial wastewater systems, and urban and suburban stormwater systems), nonpoint sources (such as runoff from farms, rural residential areas, and septic systems), and air deposition (emissions from power plants and motor vehicles).

Because these goals represent a limit on the amount of nutrient loading from each tributary watershed of the Bay, it is in the interest of the State and each local jurisdiction to plan

wisely for the future. All stakeholders need to be engaged in a coordinated strategy to reach and maintain the water quality and habitat improvement goals set forth by the *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement*.

Maryland's Tributary Strategy embodies this coordinated strategy. It provides a potential road map to improve water quality in local streams, rivers, and the Bay through the implementation of point and nonpoint source management practices. Released in April 2004, the strategy identifies the level of effort needed to meet the water quality standards that will restore and maintain the Bay's living resources.

While the strategy's level of implementation practices is challenging, Maryland remains committed to restoring the Bay and meeting water quality standards. Consequently, the State has embarked on a process to develop implementation plans that take a pragmatic approach to setting measurable and achievable implementation goals.

Maryland's Tributary Strategy Statewide Implementation Plan identifies a series of actions to be taken at by the State in the next 2- and 5-year timeframes with corresponding evaluations. Financing the restoration activities will be a key challenge of this effort and will require the support of the public and renewed investment on the part of local and Federal partners, our watershed States, and the private sector. Our estimates on the rate of implementation are based on existing resources and near-term budget projections as well as regulatory requirements. They do not include specific local government implementation activities or potential budget changes that may increase implementation rates statewide. The implementation schedules also reflect continued efforts to fund the most cost effective best management practices included in the Tributary Strategy.

Since it has long been recognized that most of the decisions needed to achieve water quality improvements are made at the local level, the implementation plan also serves as the framework for developing basin plans that will identify local actions to improve water quality. The development of the Statewide Implementation Plan and the Basin Level Plans provide opportunities to improve on Federal, State, and local cooperation and to recognize the hard work of local governments, watershed associations, farmers, landowners, individual citizens, and civic groups.

Maryland's Tributary Teams are charged with coordinating the development of the Basin Level Plans. This process is intended to be dynamic with the plans being updated every 2-years to allow for the inclusion of new practices, programs, and technologies.

The Governor and we, his Bay Cabinet, recently announced several initiatives that will

enhance implementation of *Maryland's Tributary Strategy,* including cost-sharing on manure transport, fostering wetland restoration, expanding the cover crop program to include commodity cover crops, implementing an urban tree canopy program, and establishing a targeted watershed program beginning with the Corsica River watershed. These initiatives, which are consistent with recommendations the State has received from the Tributary Teams and other groups, are included in the Implementation Plan as part of the 2-year action plan for each appropriate agency. In addition, Governor Ehrlich will continue to pursue additional funding at the Federal level to enhance and accelerate the implementation of the Tributary Strategy in Maryland.

Following the lead of the State, we recommend that all local governments begin examining their land use policies and programs to assess their ability to minimize future growth impacts on water quality and to incorporate restoration efforts into their capital and operating budgets. Many programs — such as comprehensive planning, water and sewer planning, watershed management planning, subdivision regulations and approval processes, land preservation, zoning, erosion and sediment control, and stormwater management — can support meeting the nutrient reduction goals. All of these programs, therefore, should be reviewed and their effectiveness optimized.

We look forward to continuing to work with all of the stakeholders in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to accomplish the challenging task of restoring this magnificent estuary.

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